

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7580

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 3614

LIMDIS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

DEPARTMENT FOR EA/PRCM

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINR, EAIR, CH

SUBJECT: PRC CAAC OPERATIONS IN AND THROUGH TOKYO

SUMMARY: SINCE CAAC OPERATIONS BEGAN IN LATE SEPTEMBER 1974, THE CHINESE TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE HAS IMPROVED CONSIDERABLY BUT THERE ARE STILL FACETS OF THEIR PERFORMANCE WHICH NEED CORRECTION. ATTENTION TO SAFETY, CALCULATION OF FUEL-LOAD CAPACITIES, AND IMPERFECT ENGLISH REMAIN PROBLEM AREAS. JAL PROVIDES GROUND SUPPORT AND AIR CONTROL SERVICES FOR CAAC, BUT THE CHINESE HAVE ESTABLISHED A LARGELY SELF-CONTAINED CAAC OFFICE STAFFED SOLELY BY PRC CITIZENS. ENG SUMMARY.

1. AFTER ITS INITIAL FLIGHT SEPTEMBER 29, 1974, CAAC OPENED A TOKYO OFFICE IN OCTOBER 1974. OFFICE WAS INITIALLY STAFFED BY EIGHT PERSONS, INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND JAPANESE
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LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS AND A COOK. A LOCAL OVERSEAS CHINESE

DRIVER WAS HIRED BUT HE HAS BEEN REPLACED, WE ASSUME FOR SECURITY REASONS, BY A DRIVER FROM THE PRC. OFFICE NOW HAS 11 MEMBERS. ALTHOUGH THE OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED AS A SELF-CONTAINED UNIT, CAAC WAS INITIALLY HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON PRC EMBASSY SUPPORT IN LOGISTICS, FINANCES (EMBASSY PAID BILLS), AND FOR POLITICAL GUIDANCE. CAAC HAS OSTENSIBLY CUT TIES NOW WITH EMBASSY AND HANDLES ITS OWN FINANCIAL DEALINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT EMBASSY STILL PROVIDES POLITICAL DIRECTION.

2. CAAC DEPENDS SOLELY ON JAL IN JAPAN FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT, AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL, MAINTENANCE, FOOD SERVICES, AND EXPEDITION OF VISAS, JAL ALSO SERVES AS GENERAL SALES AGENTS (AND, IF RUMOR IS TRUE, FAVORS JAL FLIGHTS BEFORE TICKETING CAAC SEATS). CAAC OFFICE IS ADJACENT TO JAL AT HANEDA AIRPORT, BUT SHARES A CARGO OFFICE WITH MALAYSIAN AIRLINES.

3. OF TOTAL FOURTEEN INTERNATIONAL CAAC FLIGHTS A WEEK, TWO ROUND-TRIP FLIGHTS CONSTITUTE SERVICE PROVIDED BETWEEN THE PRC AND JAPAN (ROUTE IS SERVED AS WELL BY JAL, AIR FRANCE, AIR PAKISTAN, AND IRAN AIR--SWISSAIR IS EXPECTED TO INAUGURATE SERVICE SOON.). ALL OVERSEAS FLIGHTS ARE BY BOEING 707.

CREWS ARE TURN-AROUND AND ARE NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE RESTRICTED AREAS OF THE AIRPORT. IN ADDITION TO REGULAR PASSENGER FLIGHTS, CAAC PROVIDES FREQUENT CHARTER SERVICE FOR VARIOUS JAPANESE AND CHINESE OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS, CARGO SHIPMENTS (I.E. EELS AND PANDAS), VIP FLIGHTS (FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON), AND SHUTTLING BUSINESSMEN TO THE CANTON TRADE FAIRS. IN EARLY DECEMBER 1974 SOON AFTER INAUGURATION OF FLIGHTS, CAAC WAS LOADED WITH 54 PERCENT OF CAPACITY, CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN THE PROJECTED 34 PERCENT. WE BELIEVE THIS FIGURE HAS DROPPED BUT IN ANY CASE CAAC APPEARS TO BE OPERATING AT LESS THAN THE 60 PERCENT NORMALLY REQUIRED FOR PROFITABLY SERVICE.

4. BASED ON LIMITED BUT KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVATIONS BY EMBOFFS OF CAAC OPERATIONS, CAAC HANDLING OF ROUTINE ORDINARY AIR TRAFFIC PROCEDURES SEEMS TO HAVE IMPROVED
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CONSIDERABLY SINCE INITIAL OPERATIONS IN 1974. THEY SEEM SKILLED AT LANDING IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS. CAAC NOW USES TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES, CAPABLY FILES ITS OWN FLIGHT PLANS, HAS ACCESS TO AND USES JAL'S WEATHER FACILITIES, AND NOW HAS ITS OWN PERSONNEL WORKING WITH JAL CREWS ON MAINTENANCE OF CAAC AIRCRAFT.

5. CAAC CREWS HANDLE AIR NAVIGATION ROUTES ADEQUATELY

ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT ALWAYS APPEAR OVERLY CONCERNED WITH SAFETY. CAAC PLANES HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO BE SIXTY MILES OFF OCEAN CHECK-POINTS AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CAAC PLANE WHICH FETCHED THE NIXON PARTY LAST MONTH LANDED ON THE WRONG RUNWAY AT ONE OF THEIR NORTH AMERICAN STOPS. CHINESE APPARENTLY DO NOT MONITOR RADIO CLOSELY DURING FLIGHT AND THEREFORE CAN BE DIFFICULT TO RAISE. THEY SEEM TO HAVE TROUBLE CALCULATING FUEL-LOAD CAPACITIES. IMPERFECT ENGLISH CAUSES DIFFICULTIES WITH AIR CONTROL COMMUNICATIONS. THEY ARE ALSO STILL NOT FULLY COMPLIANT WITH CUSTOMARY AIR COURTESIES; FOR EXAMPLE, DURING TOKYO STOPS ENROUTE TO AND FROM THE US, THEY QUIT THEIR PARKING SPOT ADJACENT TO THE AIRPORT WITH ALL FOUR ENGINES OPERATING AT FULL THROTTLE RATHER THAN WITH STANDARD SINGLE ENGINE AT ONE THIRD THROTTLE. OVERALL, DESPITE THESE LINGERING PROBLEM AREAS, THEY HAVE DECIDEDLY IMPROVED THEIR PERFORMANCE.

5. FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT, WE RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT CONTACT THE 7602 AIR INTEL GROUP AT FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA.
SHOESMITH

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